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CHILTON'S AUGUST 1987

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ENTERING THE ELECTRONICS ERA

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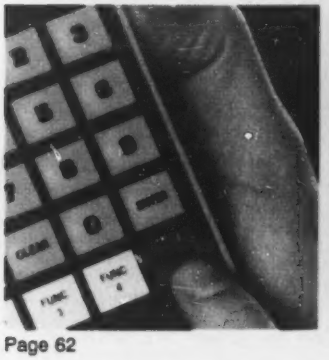

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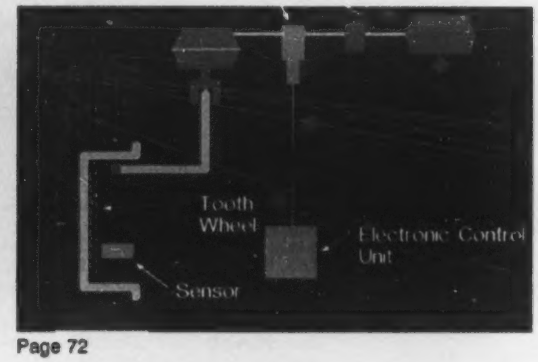

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PTCA Cost Index Survey is guide for private fleets

Washington, D.C. – The average cost of operating a private fleet of vans and/or straight trucks is $2.13 per mile; $1.38 per mile for a tractor-trailer fleet; and $1.62 for a mixed fleet. Those figures were generated from the Private Truck Council of America's 1986 Cost Index Survey.

Some of the driver cost items in the survey are:

- Union drivers for company-owned fleets make an average of 15¢-per-mile more than nonunion drivers.
- In leased fleets, union drivers make 25¢-per-mile more than nonunion (73¢-per-mile vs. 48¢).
- Average hourly wages for union drivers in company-owned fleets are $11.31.
- Average tractor age is five years; seven years for straight trucks.

This is the sixth annual survey of private fleet operating costs sponsored by the PTCA. Richard Henderson, executive vice president, said the 1986 survey represents a major effort to improve the sampling base, methodology and credibility of the Cost Index. The 1986 survey sampled 2,962 fleets and 577 responded (20%).

While the results of the 1986 Cost Index differ little from previous years, Henderson said they are more reliable than in the past. One reason for that is the response rate quadrupled to 20% in 1986 from 5% in 1985.

"We took a different approach in 1986 in that we changed vendors to Chilton Research Services (CRS), the same outfit that does the ABC news polls," Henderson said.

The previous vendor was A.T. Kearney, a Chicago-based management consulting firm. "Kearney did a good job," Henderson added. "[They got] a very difficult project off the ground. But we found ourselves at the point where we needed to place the Cost Index in the hands of a professional research establishment that could improve the methodology and the reliability of the information."

Private fleet operators typically do not reveal operating cost data, making it extremely difficult to compare the efficiency of their operations with similar ones. The PTCA Cost Index measures a number of critical cost items, and is reportedly the only available resource that private fleet managers can use as a point of reference to compare operating costs.

"We recognized that it was time to make some changes if the study was ever to be the valuable resource for private fleet managers that it has the potential of becoming," Henderson said.

CRS research account executive Robert J. Thomas said: "This year's survey is the first step in building a cost data base that will be of greater value to managers of private fleets." While the numbers look similar to those of previous Cost Indexes, Thomas warns against comparing 1986 with previous years, "because the 1986 survey used scientific sampling methodology, making the respondent base more representative of all private fleets as a group.

"The 1986 survey is a good, solid baseline for future surveys, which will include up to 10 vocational breakouts," Thomas said. "Vocational breakouts will provide for the first time a reliable source of numbers for private fleet managers to compare fleet operating costs to 'like' operations."

The 1986 survey provides statistics by: type of equipment operated; type of tractor-trailer fleet (van, tanker, refrigerated, flat bed); by fleet size; by geographic region; driver affiliation; and equipment owned or leased.

Survey cost is $225 for PTCA members, and $285 for non-members. Customized reports from the data base are available at additional cost. Contact CRS at 215-964-4653. □

OPERATING STATISTICS

	Total	Tractor/ Trailer	Straight Truck/Van	Mixed
Total miles driven	1,209,199,000	671,373,000	427,191,000	110,635,000
Average miles per trip	551	778	288	480
Total number of tractors	10,299	7,174	1,359	1,766
Total number of straight trucks/vans	18,905	121	17,772	1,012
Trailer to tractor ratio	2.3	2.5	–	1.9
Average tractor age	5 years	4 years	–	6 years
Average straight truck age	7 years	–	6.5 years	7 years
Average tractor mpg	6	6	–	6
Average straight truck mpg	7	–	7	7
Average power units per mechanic	13.3	6.1	17.8	8.4
Union/nonunion fleets	215/296	96/162	95/129	24/57
Leased/owned equipment	152/336	137/81	11/194	4/61

Definitions of terms: Tractor/trailer fleet: the number of tractors is greater than or equal to 80% of the fleet's total vehicles. Straight truck/van: the number of straight trucks/vans is greater than or equal to 80% of the fleet's total vehicles. Mixed fleet: all fleets which do not fit the defintion of tractor/trailer or straight truck/van fleet. Owned equipment: 80% or more of the fleet's power units are owned. Leased equipment: 80% or more of the fleet's power units are leased.

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COMMERCIAL CARRIER JOURNAL

Troubleshooting Brake Balance

Also:

Product Evaluation: Volvo "FE"

Managing Safety at M.S. Carriers

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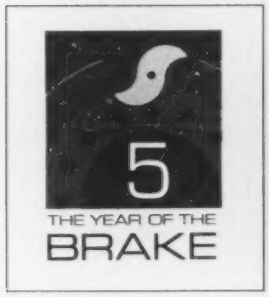

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Boston truckers and realtors battle

Boston, Mass.—Real estate and trucking interests in this 200-year-old city are at loggerheads in a battle over turf, and the trucking industry appears to be losing.

At stake is residential and commercial real estate development around the port of Boston, a major cargo and freight facility serving the entire New England area.

Kevin Kiley, Massachusetts Motor Truck Assn. director, said there are 17 major construction projects ready to begin and 10 more on drawing boards, all of which will effectively block truck access to the port. The development means truckers are being pushed aside or pushed out as rising real estate values associated with the port play a dominant role in the area's future.

Steven Jones, president of BFT Trucking, Inc., one of the city's largest truck terminal operators, said: "We're all being pressured out of the city."

Jones has less than 18 months on his terminal's lease, which covers 5.5 acres. The lease is held by a real estate developer, and Jones does not expect it to be renewed.

Don Eldridge, president of Hebden and McKenzie Transport Co., East Boston, said he has moved his operation three times in two years and may now have to leave the city because of escalating rents and development pressures.

"They're trying to push all the truckers out of the city. To be in South Boston, you've got to be a Philadelphia lawyer," said Manwell Souza, owner of Rea's Express.

Jones said if truckers are forced farther and farther away, drayage at the port will become a thing of the past, and cargo will bypass Boston in favor of New York.

"Not just my business, but the whole port of Boston is in real jeopardy. If the trucks cannot get to and from the port, they might as well be nonexistent," he said.

Boston officials are reportedly working with the MMTA, truckers and area neighborhoods to establish new truck routes. But truckers say they also need a new terminal area or drop-off sites that are protected against future residential and commercial real estate development.

The Massachusetts Port Authority, better known as Massport, holds some real estate around the port of Boston, and trucking and shipping interests hope Massport will make some of that land available for terminal space.

Truckers have to be protected, says Massport Maritime director Anne Aylward. But Ms. Aylward said the International Longshoremen's Association has the right to assert jurisdiction over Massport property, but that means a substantial increase in the cost of trucking services, which Boston truckers cannot afford. □

A Correction

Overland Express, Indianapolis, Ind., was ranked 55th in the listing of the Top 100 for-hire carriers in CCJ's July 1987 issue. In the story that accompanied the Top 100 ranking, however, Overland Express was incorrectly noted as being unlisted.

In 1986, Overland Express lost $16.1 million on revenues of $99.3 million. In 1985, the company was ranked 56th in the Top 100.

CCJ regrets the error. □

DOT, Congress act to tighten 'hazmat' regs

When the 1974 hazardous materials transportation law is updated later this year or next, the new rules probably will strengthen the federal government's role in regulating hazmat shipments and diminish the impact of state regulations.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is proposing to require motor carriers hauling "extremely hazardous" materials to have a federal permit. DOT has not yet defined "extremely hazardous."

States would be preempted from shipping papers, placarding, and regulation packaging requirements, but could regulate routing and require local permits as long as their standards are consistent with DOT standards. Federal officials estimate that about 1,000 carriers would have to get permanent federal hazmat permits.

On a related front, Rep. Cardiss Collins (D-Ill.) is sponsoring legislation that would establish a $100 million annual fund to train and equip local hazmat response teams, financed by a .1¢ tax on motor fuels; require hazmat shippers and transporters to register with DOT and pay a fee to cover the costs involved; provide federal grants to states and local areas to designate hazmat routes and safe havens for parking such loads under DOT guidelines; and impose a minimum $500 fine for non-compliance with federal regulations. □

Federal law on alcohol use now reaches into truck cab

From CCJ's Washington Bureau

Under a regulation adopted by the Federal Highway Administration, a commercial vehicle driver may now be put out of service for 24 hours if found to have used alcohol while on duty or within four hours of going on duty.

Issued under the law that establishes the single commercial driver's license, the regulation marks the first time federal regulations banning alcohol use have reached into the cab, according to the American Trucking Associations. While federal regulations have banned alcohol consumption, enforcement was left up to police.

Now, federal or state roadside safety inspectors can place a driver out of service if alcohol usage is detected. A cited driver must notify his employer and the state which issued his commercial driver's license. □